

Last summer, soccer players from across America represented the USA on a soccer tour to Europe as members of the famed East-West Soccer Ambassadors...



Applications now being accepted from players ages 12-19 to form teams for the Summer 1990 Ambassadors European Soccer Tour. An exciting and educational opportunity!

YOUR PASSPORT TO EUROPEAN SOCCER TRAVEL!

Call or write for more information and free brochure:

East-West
AMBASSADORS

30640 Bainbridge Road ■ Solon, OH 44139
216/248-0200 or 1-800-248-KICK (5425)

East-West is a 501(c)3 non-profit soccer organization.

"toy companies are going to make them a semi-hit whether kids like it or not." Hasbro's Record Breakers (\$8 to \$10) will probably make the biggest run; the company is spending \$6 million to advertise its 20 models. Hasbro sells cars with track (\$65 to \$85) or you can buy them alone, allowing them to zoom quickly into the nearest wall, chair or small child.

■ **Dolls.** The hot new doll is a klutz. Oopsie Daisy (\$45) from Tyco crawls across the floor, falls down, cries and then gets back up and keeps on crawling. She will do this until you flick the switch in the small of her back, or until her batteries run down. Oopsie looks cute with her chubby cheeks and blond plastic hair, and they've given her the aroma of baby powder. Her cry, on the other hand, sounds like a tortured cat, and she acts like she's crawled out of the twilight zone. Still, Angela Bourdon, a spokesperson for Toys "R" Us, says Oopsie is selling strongly: "She's got a real personality."

Other new dolls that will do well are really old dolls. Mattel has issued a Happy Holidays Barbie (\$30) as part of her 30th-year line. Tyco has reintroduced Betsy Wetsy (\$30) and Tiny Tears (\$30)—dolls from 30 years ago that will probably appeal as much to moms as to their kids. "They're really going for the 'thirtysomething' audience," says Carlat. And Cabbage Patch Kids (\$16 to \$34) are being relaunched by Hasbro. The Kids, you will remember, were the toy of 1984 and 1985 before the Patch ran dry.

■ **Musical instruments.** Or perhaps "ersatz music-making electronic equipment." The toys in this category resemble actual instruments, but only with the help of batteries. Tyco's Hot Lixx (\$60) "guitar," for example, has no strings. Eight square buttons along the neck play—and repeat—a variety of riffs. Eight little oval buttons play single notes, but no one needs to hit them. The guitar actually sounds great if you let it play itself. Hit Stix 2 (\$20), from Nasta, are electronic drumsticks which reproduce up to 44 different percussive sounds. You can make these noises, from snare to tomtom, without actually hitting anything, which saves the cost of actual drums. And, for budding vocalists, there's Ohio Art's DynaMike (\$30), a self-contained microphone-amplifier-speaker which amplifies and, when desired, distorts the voice.

Of course, many of the best-selling toys this holiday season won't be new. The Nintendo Entertainment System will be huge again. So will Micro Machines, tiny cars made by Galoob. And among action figures—a boy's dolls—the strongest seem to be Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles from Playmates, Real Ghostbusters from Kenner and Hasbro's veteran of the toy wars, G.I. Joe. Joe, unlike much of the class of '89, is a toy for all seasons.

RON GIVENS

FAMILY

A Really Spooky Security Blanket



PAUL F. GERO—SYGMA

Company kid: Playing at the CIA

There's nothing routine about the Langley Children's Center. The staff of 28 have all passed polygraph tests and FBI checks. Parents of the 104 children who attend must present themselves to guards at the entrance to the compound and again to the center's security guard. Cubbyholes for clothes are identified by first names and numbers only: Katlin 2 and Christopher 3 hang their coats without revealing their classified surnames. All that secrecy is necessary because the parents of these youngsters work for a special company. It is, in fact, "the Company": the Central Intelligence Agency.

Behind an imposing gate patrolled by armed guards, the \$1.2 million, 10,000-square-foot center is located in the CIA's northern Virginia headquarters. The facility is the flagship among dozens of day-care centers the government has opened since Congress passed legislation in 1985 authorizing federal agencies to provide space for child care. The three-month-old center is outfitted with Lilliputian furniture, heated floors and tyke-level windows. The building is divided into three "pods" for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Last week First Lady Barbara Bush went to the center for a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony at the agency her husband used to head. After the visit, some children were asked if they knew why the president's wife had come. "I know," volunteered 4-year-old Gregory, who did the Company proud with his reply. "But I'm not telling."